DSROI 10th Anniversary I How feminists with disabilities transform feminist theory and practice?

Have you ever been an alumni of DSROI? Have you ever participated in DSROI in the past? Any alumni in the room? Ah, much better. All right, any alumni of DSROI? Okay, whoo, awesome. All right, fantastic.

Any faculty members of DSROI or teaching assistants? Whoo! Yay, awesome. Any friends and allies of DSROI? Whoo, there we are. This is our community, Disability, Sexuality, and Rights Online Institute, and I am honored to have the five of us here looking into some deeper concepts that we explore through the institute.

If I have my stump here, mom, can you still hear me? Yes, okay, that's all right. Fantastic, so we have been given a tough task, right? We have been asked to explore critical concepts. So those of you who have been alumni of DSROI would know that we explore a lot of concepts at the intersection of disability, sexuality, and rights in a very in-depth manner during the course of six weeks.

So the task given to us is to pick one concept from disability theory and disability justice-related concepts, and to draw links between how that has made an impact on feminist theory and practice. And we have been given five minutes each to do this. All right, so that's the challenge, including for myself.

So, Arushi, I'm counting on you to keep us on track. And so, just to start off, my name is Niluka, as you already know. I'm wearing a long beige kaftan.

There are purple stripes going across it. I'm a dark-skinned woman. I'm wearing lotus-shaped earrings.

I have shoulder-length hair, and I'm feeling pretty good, so I have a big smile on my face at the moment. So the first thing that I wanted to really look at, kind of drawing in from the conversations of the first panel, was around ableism and the framework of disability justice as something that has really contributed to feminist thinking and politics over the past couple of years. When you look at critical disability studies, a lot of the thinking has evolved, as DSROI has also evolved as an institute.

The framework of disability justice, also in tandem, has grown over the past 10 to 15 years that we are talking about in terms of the history of the institute. And disability justice really brings us back home when we look at how ableism, that provides a normative framework of the normative body, the normative mind, the normative way of being, being the valued way of operating in society, and how we then devalue all that is deemed abnormal, and especially in the context of disability, the devaluation and dehumanization of us who are persons with disabilities and our ways of being in this world. When disability justice comes into the picture, that's that also the important aspect that it emerges from the disability, sexuality, and rights space.

It emerges from, although it has North American roots, it's being kind of evolving in its different manifestations in a global South context as well. It's looking at the leadership of the

most impacted, right? Really centering the subaltern and what those kind of experiences or those insights can bring into the larger feminist movement. We're looking at an anti-capitalist politics.

How do we measure the worth of human life in terms of our productivity, in terms of what we do, or in terms of who we are and our beingness in this world? It looks at a decolonial way of understanding our beingness. So for example, Janet earlier in the first panel talked about ableism and the way in which we look at life or the value of life in terms of our contribution as workers, our contribution as productive citizens and reproductive citizens. But how do we challenge those notions? And that's what disability justice kind of brings to the conversation.

The need for cross-movement organizing that we spoke of and we heard of in terms of its validity and its immediacy in the last panel as well. We talked about the notions of debility during this course, those of you who have taken on the course, right? In terms of how we cripple bodies through capitalist frameworks, through notions, through experiences like militarization, which kind of impairs our bodies and renders us debilitated. So what are those implications then for how we understand life and the way we value life? So there are many other strands that come into play when we think about disability justice.

And a lot of the other speakers will also touch upon these strands, which I'm not going into great detail about. But I just want to also touch upon that idea of militarization and the ongoing wars and conflicts that we are dealing with at many levels, at the ground level, at the conceptual level, at the level of discourse as well. And to really say the intersectional orientation that disability justice brings, there's this quote that says, solidarity from solitary cells to open air prisons, which I think is very relevant given the realities of what we are going through.

So now we'll go to the other speakers as well and see how this kind of disability justice oriented way of approaching life in general and activism more broadly can shape the way we practice as feminists in both our theory and in the work that we do. So I'm now going to turn to Renu. Renu, five minutes for you to pick a concept from what we discussed during the DSROI and kind of explain to us how that applies to feminist thinking and politics.

Thanks. Thank you. I'm not going to obey the facilitator and I'm going to talk a little bit about how disability studies or the approach to disability has opened up a new lexicon and we're using these words all the time, participation, inclusion, reasonable accommodation, accessibility.

This is a new terminology and a new way of looking at reality. And here I want to say if we bring in feminism, a lot of the work in disability studies and in particular in the feminist disability studies has been done by feminists with disabilities across the world. So there is that embryonic and very intrinsic relationship between feminism and disability studies.

Now the problem is that many feminist, all these interdisciplinary spaces like LGBTQ studies, even to some extent Dalit studies which have looked at oppression have taken a lot of epistemological inspiration from feminist studies and then they have enriched it further. So now if we look at disability studies, there is a whole vocabulary as I said that has come in right from ableism, disabilism, reasonable accommodation and these are the new

vocabularies which have entered into common parlance. They are there in common parlance now and they will expand and their sources are disability studies.

So there's that conceptual history that we must never forget. That is kind of the edifice of constituting the disability experience. But if we look at feminism, where has disability studies actually made a very conceptual contribution to feminist thinking? And I think there are a couple of areas which I'll pick on, three areas basically.

One is disability, the idea of disability patriarchy. Now there are different patriarchies. Patriarchy is not a uniform or homogenous concept.

There is Dalit patriarchy, there is capitalist patriarchy, there is socialist patriarchy and there is Brahminical patriarchy and there is Dalit patriarchy. And it was referred to earlier how the disability movement across the world has been male dominated. And it is because of the intervention of feminist disability scholars and activists that we have a feminist approach to disability and because of that feminist angle, we have disability and sexuality coming into play.

So we must see that connection that has happened and that there is another world of disability which is very patriarchal. And we know this even in terms of policy, in terms of canvassing at different fora, where there is a gap between the concerns of women with disabilities and men with disabilities and the gap is still there in the communication between these two constituencies. So that's one thing I'd like to just flag on the table.

The other thing is the idea of care. You know, traditional feminist thinking, conventional feminist thinking has looked at care as burden, the burden of women who have to do housework, who have to do care work for the disabled, for the elderly, who have to do reproductive labor. So care in that way was a burden.

Only now are we having a more positive approach to care even within feminism in the concepts of unpaid work and that kind of discourse. But the earlier version was not. I think what disability brought to the table was that care is a very critical, important and satisfying form of labor, form of work, form of engagement.

And we have to look at care work not only from the perspective of the carer, which is the dominant discourse, but the perspective of the cared for or the care receiver. And there's a whole dynamics of, you know, reciprocity, of interconnections, of intimacy that we need to acknowledge and that receiving care need not be also put as a burden to the care receiver. I think that's one contribution that disability studies has made and can make.

And the last point I'll make is the idea of the autonomous individual. Feminists and, you know, other discourses have talked about this idea of the autonomous, independent, free choice-making individual. But what is actually life like? Life is not autonomy, life within, you know, we would all, the species wouldn't have existed if we had thought of that.

It is collective, it is interconnected, it is intersectional. And the idea of the independent, autonomous human being is a mess. And I think there is interdependence at every level of our lives and we can experience it in every, you know, from birth to death.

So I think that idea of interdependence has actually been actualized by disability thinking and disability experience. So I'll stop there. Fantastic.

Woo! Thank you, Renu, so much for those very valuable and deep insights. And in terms of, again, making linkages with disability justice and the role of care webs in our collective existence, in our collective survival, not just as persons with disabilities, but as humanity in general, and how that ties into notions of interdependence and the way in which we re-evaluate what it means to be cared for, to care, to be vulnerable, and to be human. So thank you for those insights, Renu.

With that, we now turn to Jeeja. Jeeja, any particular ideas you have in terms of how thinking around disability and how that has changed over time and ways in which that has changed thinking on feminism and feminist practices as well? I will be re-speaking for Jeeja. So, well, actually change is happening.

But it is a very slow, but it is a very slow process. I would like to highlight legal capacity. I will speak about legal capacity and how legal capacity plays a big role in our lives.

When we talk about legal capacity, we tend to think only within the legal framework. We tend to think only through the legal framework. But legal capacity is much more.

It is about popular culture. Norms. Practices.

A society. Within a certain society. Within a certain society.

Society. Like, so like, in a society, like India. In societies like India? Within a society where people know each other.

Convention. Conventional. Which is very conventional? Yeah.

When rights of any people is concerned. Where, can you repeat this one? When the rights of any people is concerned. Yeah.

Concerned. In India, at the age of 50, you can still be a child. Yeah, that is even for able-bodied.

Decision-making. Decision-making. Well, we are in, naturally, when we come to people with disabilities.

Naturally, when we come to people with disabilities? The situation is more complicated. The situation is more complicated. Yeah.

We know it, we have the UNCRPD. We have the UNCRPD. And in India, has the new IPW Act new disability law.

And India has PWD Act. New disability law. Which talks about legal capacity.

Which talks about legal capacity? But, legal capacity, is still a frauded concept. But legal capacity is still a frauded concept. Yeah.

I know the predominant idea. Another predominant idea? Is legal capacity, is linked to the rights of all people. With mental capacity.

Is that legal capacity is linked with mental capacity? But, this is not always true. But this is not always true. It's not always that exposure one gets.

It's also about exposure one gets? It's about training. Training. It's about training? It's about the environment.

It's about environment. Which determine their abilities. Which determine their abilities.

Which determine their ability. To take decisions. To take decisions.

And, capacity or, legal capacity, is very related to consent. And legal capacity is very much related to consent. So, if I understand my legal capacity, of my, what I have, what are my rights, what are my rights? If this, I don't know if I got it correct.

If I understand my legal capacity. And what I am entitled to. And what I am entitled to? I will, I will be in a position.

I will be in a position? To give consent. Or. To give consent? Or I will be able to mine, at least be able to, At least to be, at least be able to determine.

Determine, whether I like, whether I like, or don't like. Whether I like or don't like. A particular situation.

Situation. A particular situation. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Shreeja. It's some really significant points raised there. And also kind of connecting back to what Renu was also talking about.

In terms of how we understand autonomy. And beingness. And what it is to be an individual agent.

In general. And how that then ties back to our normative frameworks around the assumptions we make about legal capacity. And the capacity and the ability to consent.

So thank you for those insights, Shreeja. With that, I now turn to Phyllis. Phyllis, over to you.

In terms of your insights on how disability related concepts have informed the ways in which feminist theory and practice have evolved as well. Good evening, everyone. Thanks, Niluka.

I'm a woman of dark complexion. I'm putting on glasses to assist in my vision. I'm putting on some lipstick to look good for the party today.

And I have some artificial blonde color hair stuck on my head. With that said, I'm gonna take a deep dive to how disability justice has really shaped the feminist movement in the SRHR lens. And with my previous colleagues, what they have discussed, they have really taken time to discuss a lot about the historical injustices that we have been facing as persons with disabilities when it comes to, for example, SRHR, legal capacity, decision making, intimacy, and so on and so forth.

And when we look at how we have been evolving since the conceptualization of disability justice as it was brought forth by the reproductive justice movement, we are seeing a lot of evidence, advocacy that is coming up, shaping up the feminist movement, calling out on what is being left out, the gaps that are being left out in the organizing of the feminist perspective. So when we look at the disability justice framework, we are seeing for us coming with a lot of evidence, a lot of research, calling out for cross-movement to hold people accountable to what has been happening to us, really trying to de-stigmatize the myths and misconception, bringing on the table the facts that are there, sharing our realities, our stories, where we are accessing, for example, sexual and reproductive health services when we want to identify what we want to identify with, and bringing these conversations on board and really making these conversations not uncomfortable, but normalized conversations when it comes to disability and sexuality. A lot of research says that we, as persons with disabilities, the community perceives us to be either asexual or hypersexual.

However, with the research that is on the ground, people, persons with disability, we exercise our sexuality, we want to have abortions, we want to be queer, we want to make decisions about our bodies, we want to be parents, we want to be mothers, and we want to have families of our own, like each and every one else. So the disability justice framework is really shaping so much the SRHR movement with disability and really incorporating and pushing forth for the feminist justice movement to really incorporate these aspects in their organizing. And like Nnedi said, nothing without us, you know? Nothing without us.

We have to be there, we have to be on the table, we have to tailor-make our own interventions. We have to say what accessibility means, for example, when it comes to grant-making, for example, on SRHR, why do we need a sign language interpreter? Why do we need guides, for example? And as someone was trying to explain, why our budget is slightly more higher than other projects, you know? So when we look at the disability justice movement, we have seen a lot taking place. We acknowledge that still much is yet to be accomplished.

We acknowledge that we still have a long way to go, putting in mind that we are coming from the Global South and specifically for me, Africa and Kenya, we are still, sexuality is not being spoken out loudly, where disability and sexuality still remains to be a myth, a misconception that people do not believe we still need to exercise our sexuality the way it is. We acknowledge that there is so much research and facts, but yet it has to be really broken down to the local person, to the local girl, the way someone was saying in school, how are our CSC in school when it comes to disability and sexuality? Are we getting funding? Are we getting acknowledgement that we still need, for example, comprehensive sexuality education in schools for us as girls, persons with disability? Are all these curriculums being incorporated in the mainstream schools, being incorporated to us? So we acknowledge that yes, much has been done, but still a lot needs to be done. We still continue to make noise.

We still continue to do research-based advocacy so that all this can be brought to the table. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Thank you, Phyllis, for those really insightful comments, especially in relation to the visibility that women and girls with disabilities have gained over the past years when it comes to the larger field of sexual reproductive health rights and the responsibilities and almost, what can you say, holding to accountable that has emerged out of those ways of being visibilized in the period of the DSROI that you so eloquently explained to us. So thank you for those thoughts.

We now turn to Mildred. Mildred, I know you wanted to talk a bit more about intersectionality and its implications when it comes especially in relation to interdependence, no, sorry, in relation to gender-based violence and drawing it back to concepts around disability justice. So over to you to share your insights with the audience.

Thank you so much, Niluka. I'm a black woman with braided hair and wearing an African Ankara with some shades of green and maroon and a bit of black. I'm happy to be here, and I'll talk a little more about intersectionality and in the context of gender-based violence and women with disability.

So to start us off is the acceptance of the disability justice framework that Niluka unpacked very well and zeroing down on the intersectionality that people do not leave single life issues. And historically, we were socialized to appreciate more of binary that you're either a man or a woman, and it ends there, you're disabled or not disabled. But then we say our lives are intersectional.

And people, this cuts across even the identities that we have, the sexual identities, the gender identities, and of course, these are influenced by the cultural nuances that vary from one community to the other community. So a lot has changed in terms of how feminists have been organizing in the recent past, and several movements have emerged, whether it's the disability justice movement, which is growing and just delinking from the disability rights movement where people were just organized around rights, that you have to do this because it's the law. And like Gigi has just said, that the cultural norms, the practices, shape all these interactions and determine who gets what and who doesn't get what, who is considered in the hierarchy and who is at the bottom of the pyramid.

So that has really transformed and revolutionized in our lives as women with disability. And a lot of contemporary issues that come make us to rethink and make feminist organizing to change a little bit because it was about women with disabilities disappearing in the middle. If they go to the disability movement, they are told, okay, your share is in the women's movement.

So this kind of invisibility is something that the institute has kind of changed in terms of how feminists are organizing, that we don't have to be either women or men, we don't have to be in the disability justice movement or in the feminist movement, but we can be everywhere where we want. And looking at the growing digital space, violence has actually transformed. I think in the past, it was a lot of physical violence.

And if you talk about gender-based violence, people would say about women being beaten by men, at least in African context, that is quite patriarchal, a lot of intimate partner violence, but how does this translate to people with disability? Femicide cases that have been at the peak in Kenya, for example, and we are seeing a lot of movement building along

discussing femicide. But then the question is, how are women with disability impacted by femicide acts in Kenya? And this is playing out and women with disability are showing up in solidarity with other women to just say, hey, look here, femicide is not, who is being targeted in femicide in Kenya? Is it the younger women? Of course, and that's what we've seen a lot of profiling of younger girls in higher learning institutions, but also vulnerable women. And we've seen a lot of attacks taking shape of disability because either a deaf woman cannot scream, so they are attacked, and they cannot report the cases of femicide attacks, they are killed.

And then we see also women with intellectual disability being the soft spots. And that happens also at family level, when Renu was talking about care and how care has revolutionized. So people who are completely and fully relying on support from people, but then this becomes center of perpetration of violence and who dies the most, who is in the statistics of femicide and what stories are told about femicide.

So that has also changed. And if we talk about the climate justice, the climate crisis that is happening, a lot of discussion in Africa centered around pastoralist communities, but where are women with disability who live in the pastoralist community when everybody is migrating to look for food, for livelihood, who moves, who is left in the house? I mean, all those questions. So we are all concerned about taking care of people's livelihood.

And then there are people who disappear. And then that also informs the organizing, the feminist organizing, the climate justice organizing. So it's kind of intersectional in a way.

And we have to tackle these issues from point of reality that we are in all these spaces. And if pastoralist women are dying because of hunger, of extended droughts, because of heat waves, women with albinism in Africa getting cancers because of the climate change, but then how are we organizing to reach these people without thinking about it's a pastoralist issue? It's a femicide issue about younger women. We need to start thinking about organizing, looking at the greater lenses, even cases of property rights in Africa and inheritance.

Who gets land? And how is this defined by your sexuality? Who is at the center? Who is at the margin? So we've had like a lot of legal framework changing and you just spoke to this a lot. And Arushi, I hear you. Yeah, thank you.

So the point is in feminist organizing, we got to center disability, gender and sexuality and not looking at it at one angle. Thank you. Fantastic.

Thank you so much, Mildred, for taking us through a complex array of different manifestations of violence that women and girls, especially with disabilities face and in terms of its uniqueness and in terms of how it also interconnects with other intersectional issues of climate justice and really looking at the need from a disability justice perspective to center the leadership of the most impacted given the points that you raise. So really powerful. Thank you for those interventions.

We have come to a space now where all of us have shared in different ways and in different contexts as to how disability related concepts have manifested and have influenced both thinking and practice in relation to feminism. And now we would like to open the floor to all

of you if you had either any questions or any comments or observations in terms of what has been discussed so far. There will be members from the CREA team.

Yes, I think so, with microphones. Yeah, so a lot of rich discussion that has happened here. If you all had any insights or observations or anything that you'd like to add to that dialogue, I would like to invite you to do so now.

So it's not a question or not a suggestion. I just want to appreciate you all. Waving hands for everyone.

So we have women here from all kind of communities and diversity. So that's the same role model I would like to have in India as well. So these were the valuable discussions.

And I see that there are something similar in deaf community as well. So I'm so glad that today we have a deaf person as well, the hosting the session and also all the valuable people. Absolutely, thank you so much for that beautiful comment.

And in terms of access is love, access is what it is and this is access and this is love. So thank you so much. I see there was a hand up.

Good evening, thank you so much. I am DSROI alumni 2023 and I come from Kathmandu, Nepal. Now my question is, you see, I met Nidhi in Bangkok, okay, at now, okay, I'm just trying to bring in the perspective as well as because it's connected to the second panel discussion also, okay.

But I don't know panelists from the second panel discussion personally, that's why. So now we were at the Beijing 25 CSO conference and before that we were at Mayusa. I'm a Mayusa alumni also.

Now my question it in Nepal also, there are many, many feminists, queer organizations, all right, organizations working for the third gender, et cetera, et cetera. Now what they say is that, oh, we are damn feminist. You see, we are very inclusive.

But you know, they say that they are only, but their actually actions prove that they are only inclusive in words, but they are not inclusive. Many, many talking about even APWLD, APWLD is only inclusive in words, not to 100% extent, but to a lot of extent, okay. Now my question is how to build out such strategies so that we can't force, of course, quote unquote force, but of course, at least, you know, at least, you know, actually make them to think over this, that, you see, it's a high time that they are inclusive of us, even when they bring about dialogues on sitting on the table on their own, you see.

So that's my question. And my question is directed to Professor Renu, Professor Renu. Renu, are you listening? I'm trapped.

Yeah, so I think what, yeah, sorry. You know, sometimes what happens is that when I attend some of these academic conferences, I'm answering your question, and I talk about disability, and everybody's very appreciative, and these are very, you know, highfalutin intellectual people, and they get it, and they're, like, fine. And then all of a sudden, there's an event.

There's the action. And then whether these people have imbibed or actually understood comes to the fore, and in most cases, people fail. Because, you know, you say, oh, we're just preaching to the choir, to the converted, but actually, what does that mean? You may intellectually understand something, and you may be most articulate about it, and you may be able to convince people that you know it all, and you're very whatever.

It's not, you know, that whole thing, what we call in today's language, virtue signaling, right? But when it, virtue signaling, you know, you're signaling that you are right there, you know? And this is this domination of this, you know, I think the tyranny of political correctness. This discourse is actually a tyranny, because you can hide under it, and you know, you can, this discourse may not touch your belief system. Why is it so difficult? You know, I mean, I'll give you another example.

Smoking, you know, we have medical evidence. It's so problematic. But can you stop people from smoking? You have to force them to stop.

You have to bring in laws. You have to create smoking zones. You have to be forceful.

And then, you know, people may stop out of habit. They may, they may not. So coming to your point, the, you know, I think verbal advocacy is not enough.

We need some more innovative methods of convincing and changing belief systems, which is really a challenge. So I am, I'm sorry to say on these issues, very cynical. I mean, the test actually lies in the action.

And we have to create a model of advocacy where people are not just, you know, people are not just informed. They're actually made to feel, and then put in situations where they have to act on the, you know, information that they've received. And it's to their interest.

People act in self-interest. So, you know, the moment in an organization, they say, oh, you have to resolve these many seats for this category of people. Otherwise, your funding will stop.

People will do it. I mean, that's not the best way. It's not the most persuasive way.

But when you have this kind of, you know, deep-rooted, almost, I mean, almost, you know, a negative approach, an antipathy to certain things, you have to be a little more rigorous in convincing. And the other thing that I'd like to say is why is it so difficult? And I think this has been also, you know, brought out in the literature. People who perceive themselves as to be non-disabled, we don't know if they are or they aren't, they may not know themselves, but who perceive themselves to be non-disabled have a great fear of disability.

It fills them with morbid fear and anxiety, and they want to avoid it. Because everyone at core knows that, you know, this can, oh, were this to happen to me, or if I live till I'm 90, this will surely happen to me. But that's what people don't want to face.

So I think, you know, the advocacy that we do in terms of information, and, you know, I'm very skeptical of this awareness generation and sensitization. Maybe it works to some extent with minds that are flexible, like young people. But when you get into the older groups, you have to be a bit smart about it, and you have to be a bit coercive.

I'm sorry to use the word, but that's the only way to push people. Otherwise, we'll wait for things to evolve over time, and that may take a long time. So then we have to be ready to wait for things to happen or change organically.

Thank you so much, Renu. Any other thoughts, comments, or questions? Yes. Hi, I know it's weird because I've been with these people for the last three days.

But my question is, well, it's not a question, it's more of a thought process that is not clear yet. I think even as we are calling for like feminists and feminist spaces to center disability voices, there is also a conversation that needs to happen about weaponizing disability. I think, especially in feminist spaces, whether it's like tokenizing, whether it's weaponizing in a way that eventually I think it creates more harm to like disabled folks.

So how do we hold each other accountable? And especially like feminists who, as you say, people who are fearing of disability, people who assume they're not disabled. How do we hold such spaces accountable so that eventually there's no more harm that we are causing for like disabled people? How do we hold leaders accountable, especially in feminist spaces? And I know like this is a conversation that a lot of us don't want to have or are scared, but I think eventually it needs to happen of how we hold each other accountable and maybe call each other in in regards to we want to be more inclusive, we want to be more accommodating, but also like to what extent does some of those actions can be ill-intent, or like even if not ill-intent, but the actions, right? Like, and I think like one of the things that I appreciate with Agnieszka like as being part of the DSRI leading team is disability leadership. And I think that's something that's really important, even as we're talking about feminist spaces, being inclusive of disabled people, but also disability leadership, yeah.

Thank you for sharing that thought process with us in terms of mutual accountability within our spaces, within feminist spaces in particular, and also the leadership of persons with disabilities and the leadership of the most impacted. During our session, both Phyllis and Mildred spoke to the issue of violence and aggression that manifests in different forms. So I wonder if either of you had any thoughts in response to Shamim's thought process.

Okay, thank you so much, Niluka, and thank you, Shamim, for that question. My first comment would be like conceptualizing inclusion, like inclusive feminism, and what happened in reality, and whether this is dangerous or really pushes, centers people with disability. I think there's been a lot of tokenism that happens and being named inclusion, and at times it's about at what point do we involve people with disability, or women with disability rather? Is it at conceptualization? Is it at the tail end? Is it about ticking the boxes for donor compliance? So all this conversation happen in the civic space, but what I also like about DSROI, it is that it is intentional, and it's leadership by the most impacted.

If you have to talk about the issues of intersection of LGBTQ and disability, you must be at the space, and you have the lived experience. And this is the messaging and the practice that we need to send out to the feminist community. And of course, if it's accessibility, it can't be accessibility in theory, but accessibility in practice, which is leading by practice.

I think if we go the way of just building data, that saying we had this convening of around 500 people and 100 disabled folks came, but what did they do? What was their role in that

convening? What is their role if it's policy engagement? Is it about just signing off the document and leaving their logos that, okay, disabled women were part of the banner? So it's beyond the visual banner that we are seeing that Niluka's signature is on the banner, but authentic, real participation from conceptualization, thinking, and even highlighting the issues and people who are impacted speaking about the issues, because for a long time there's been this cliche of somebody being the voice of the voiceless. So really in feminist organizing, it's not about voiceless, but everyone has their voice, just having people amplifying their voices. That would be my comment.

Yeah, yeah, thank you. I think to add on what Mildred is saying is holding our activists accountable. If I, as Phyllis, I'm representing the disability community in a certain space and yet we are not feeling the presence of disability in my capacity, then I feel it's a high time we give space to someone else so that we can see change and tangible change in the seat that I'm holding.

Continuous sensitization to activists so that the tokenization idea comes is really, we fade it away. Right now I'm in the process of really negotiating, sitting in a space where, for example, Women's Spaces Africa is the only organization in Africa, for example, working at the intersection of abortion and disability. And I still have to negotiate for a space where a whole regional, for example, convention is to be held and where disability and abortion organizations are not being represented.

And they tell you, don't worry, Phyllis, you can come and participate. And I told them, no, I need to sit on this space to give views on how we can include other organizations with disabilities working on abortion. And even if they're not working on abortion, I feel I deserve to be in that seat equally the same way as other organizations are sitting on those seats.

So I think we should feel the impact of us in those seats when we are sitting there in that representation. How are we organizing that in such a way that other disability organization activism is benefiting from me? So holding activists into accountability when we are sitting in these spaces, let us as a movement feel impact because you are sitting on that seat. Let you not sit on the seat and yet you're not bringing our values on board.

Thank you. Fantastic. So that said, really the concluding thought is taking that space, being visible, being accountable to ourselves and to our communities and to each other and really being who we are and here we are.

So thank you everybody.